

of hours loitering among the mesquite clumps within half a mile of the plant. The old Hanlon ranch with its huge date palms loaded with ripening fruit, is located here. There are also some other fruits in their season. The Mexican in charge complained that the birds damaged his fruit and he constantly made pot shots among them.

I saw half a dozen western gnat-catchers (*Poliophtila cærulea obscura*) gleaning insects which had adhered to the sticky surface of the dates.

It was here that I saw my first Gila woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*). He flew from these same palms to a stub sticking out of a mistletoe-covered mesquite. The mistletoe was white with berries and he may have been after these, but catching a glimpse of me, scarcely fifty feet away, he gave several decided jerks of his head and then flew back to the palms. About fifteen minutes later he came to the

same spot and I had another good view of him. Other birds noted, and of which I secured specimens, were the verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*) cactus wren, (*Heleodytes brunneicapillus*) cowbird, (*Molothrus ater*) house finch, (*Carduelis mexicana frontalis*) sharp-shinned hawk, (*Accipiter velox*) and red shafted flicker; (*Colaptes cafer collaris*). Also noted a flock of seven western bluebirds, (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*), white rumped shrikes, (*Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*) and rock wrens, the latter about the gravel-covered slopes leading up from the river bottom to the main desert. I was prevented by serious illness from making a more extensive examination of this field, but I am convinced that that part of California which lies next to the Mexican boundary has much in store for ornithologists who may investigate it in the future.

A Few Notes on the Nesting of *Trochilus alexandri*.

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IT would be hard to find an individual displaying no interest at the sight of a member of the family under discussion tonight. Ornithologists and laity alike seem always imbued with enough of the æsthetic to grant these little gems a warm spot in their hearts. Personally, I will say at least, that I have found their acquaintance most fascinating.

I have chosen the black-chinned hummingbird (*T. alexandri*) because of a greater experience with the species and also because I consider it the characteristic form of this locality; certainly it is the most abundant nesting species I have observed here. Although I have met with this hummingbird forty miles inland, nearly all of the nests and eggs in my possession have been collected within two miles of the sea and practically at sea level. The small patches of willows which here and there dot dry, sandy water-courses are

shown perhaps a necessary partiality. However where cotton-woods and sycamores are found, they are not despised. Two cases in which a weed stalk and a wild grapevine were used have even come under my notice. By the side of such willow patches, strips of wild tobacco often run, and it is then that we have found an ideal nesting ground.

Nest building commences during the latter half of April and during May nesting is in full swing. During this month their purpose to perpetuate their kind is deeply seated; in one case the domicile and contents of a pair were taken three consecutive times from the identical position; the fourth nest and eggs were allowed to remain in the possession of the ambitious though unwise little mother. The nest is a dainty cup-shaped affair placed at heights varying from two to twenty feet. It is composed only of plant down and spider webs, with never a lichen or feather to

mar its snowy whiteness. However let me state that the majority are cream-colored and when sycamore down is used in the construction the nest appears a rusty color. We find it always completely saddled to a branch or twig—horizontal and otherwise, and when the angle becomes extreme an odd cornucopia effect is produced. So in such a fairy structure of $\frac{3}{4}$ inches inside diameter, the two perfectly elliptical eggs are deposited. These I have found to average .30x.51 inches. Before incubation has begun they possess a decidedly pinkish tinge and it would be difficult to say whether they look prettier before

or after their contents have been extracted—we will however leave such delicate question to the primary owners.

I have always been interested in the remarkable elasticity of the nests of the Anna hummingbird which allows itself to double its inside diameter by the time the young have reached their largest nest size. I will only add that I have found the same elasticity in *T. alexandri* although in not such a marked degree. Such are the most notable features I have observed in the nidification of this species in several years acquaintance.

Owl Notes from Southern California.

FRANK STEPHENS.

ON April 28, 1883, I took a set of nine eggs from a burrow of *Speotyto cunicularia hypogæa* near San Bernardino, and the next day another set of nine eggs from another burrow near the first one. These are the largest sets I have ever taken. I was hunting with F. Ball January 18, 1885, in the foothills northeast of San Bernardino. About noon we were walking up a gulch when Ball fired into a bush and on walking over to it picked up *Megascops flammeolus*. He said it had flown from the other side of the gulch, and appeared to be carrying in its claws something like a lizard or a bird.

On March 25, 1884, I took a set of ten eggs of *Strix pratincola* from a nest

in an old dovecote in a barn near San Bernardino. I had found a brood of six newly hatched young in this nest during January of the same year.

June 20, 1892, I shot a male, female, and one young *Syrnium occidentale* on Smith Mountain, San Diego Co., at about 5,000 feet. The young bird was just about able to fly.

I shot an adult male *Nyctala acadica* August 11, 1898, at Round Valley, San Jacinto Mts. altitude 9200 feet. I saw some small owl fly from one pine to another and shot into the pine. This is the only owl of this species I have taken in California. In July, 1894, I heard the species in Modoc County.